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T *Training in the Trades*



Trades News from the West

Director Shinae Chun meeting with Cypress Mandela/WIST Training Center staff and students at their graduation ceremony last December.

Story Continued

Cypress Mandela/WIST Training Center

The Cypress Mandela/Women-In-Skilled-Trades (WIST) Pre-Apprenticeship Program is a prime recruiting source for skilled workers in the greater Oakland, California trades industry. Managed by the Oakland Private Industry Council, the training center offers a 14-week pre-apprenticeship program for Bay Area men and women over 18 years of age.

Recently, Women's Bureau Director Shinae Chun visited the Mandela/WIST Training Center to participate in graduation ceremonies and learn about the high-quality and demanding training schedule that have made its graduates so marketable to the Oakland area trades industry. Graduates of the program work in a variety of trades, including: carpenters, ironworkers, heavy equipment operators, glaziers, cement finishers, laborers, pile drivers, millwrights, and electricians.

The Cypress Mandela Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program was initiated in 1993 to provide local residents with training and employment opportunities in repairing damaged freeways resulting from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The WIST Program began in 1988 to help prepare women enter nontraditional occupations within the construction industry.

Instructors at the center make sure training is consistently relevant to current industry needs. Experts throughout California are recruited to guest teach along side in-house staff. The program provides hands-on and classroom training as well as skills assessment and testing, and job placement. In the past two years, over 85% of the graduates were placed in jobs. On top of being well prepared for the workforce, Mandela/WIST graduates exceeded a 75% job retention rate.

Students may also earn 7 college credits from the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Davis or Laney College.

"High quality training centers such as Mandela/WIST, which are committed to helping women fully prepare for a career in the trades, serve as important models to help our country develop a world-class workforce," remarked Director Chun about her visit to the training centers program.

Washington Women Host Successful Trades Fair



More than 350 female high school students and 200 women visited with exhibitors and learned about the rewards of a career in the trades at the annual "Washington Women in Trades Fair" on May 3-4 at the Seattle Center. The annual event, hosted by the Washington Women in Trades Association and co-sponsored by the Women's Bureau, brought together employers, successful tradeswomen and women interested in working in the trades. The fair serves as an

important forum to conduct outreach to girls and women who may not be aware of high-paying career opportunities in the trades.

Participants at the event visited the interactive booths of 54 exhibitors and heard first-hand from the experience of dynamic women who have "blazed the path" for other women seeking a career in the trades.

The event offered "hands-on" activities for participants as many learned safety rules when using power tools, climbed on heavy equipment, put together electrical wires, and made planter boxes to take home. In addition, attendees:

- spoke with apprenticeship recruiters and workers
- gained information about trades jobs like bricklayers, plumbers, steamfitters, scaffold erectors, painters, tile layers, tree planters and boat builders
- learned about all aspects of enrolling in an apprenticeship program, such as minimum qualifications, selection methods, salary ranges, and how to contact people at the different training centers

Everyone at the fair was grateful for the trailblazing spirit of the women who were the first to embark on a career into the trades. As Nettie Dokes of Seattle City Light remarked, "In my heart, without them, it wouldn't be possible for me to stand here today as a journey-level line worker. They came before us and showed the establishment they could perform the work and do it successfully." Ms. Dokes made history herself as the first Black woman in the nation to graduate as a journeyman level line worker/lineman in 1992.

A key highlight of the fair was the honoring of 76 women who served our country during the World War II effort by working in the skilled trades. These real life "Rosie the Riveters" joined event attendees for a special reunion event.

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